

City of Berkeley
Making the Connections
General Plan Workshop
October 15, 1994

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*Livable Neighborhoods, Healthy Economy
 & Effective Services*



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Workshop Summary

Making the Connections:

Livable Neighborhoods,
Healthy Economy & Effective Services

The concluding workshop in a series
of seven General Plan Workshops

October 15, 1994

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Making the Connections



Introduction

This report presents a summary of the last workshop in a series of seven General Plan workshops entitled, "Making the Connections - Livable Neighborhoods, Healthy Economy, and Effective Services." The workshop was held on October 15, 1994 at the North Berkeley Senior Center. Six workshops were held from June 1994 to September 1994 to discuss the topic areas of Community Design, Economic Development, and Community Services. The last workshop made connections between the three topic areas and brought together the results from public participation in the workshop series. Sixty six people attended the meeting.

Planning Commission Chair Jeffrey Horowitz welcomed participants to the meeting and introduced Jeffrey Shattuck Leiter, Mayor of the City of Berkeley. The Mayor commended the high level of public participation in the planning process and discussed the role of the General Plan in providing policy direction for complex planning decisions.

Following the Mayor's remarks, Planning Director Gil Kelley gave a slideshow and presentation on the General Plan Update process. He explained the three phases of the General Plan Update process which was initiated in 1992 and will conclude with plan adoption in 1995: community assessment and compilation of background information, drafting the Plan and the environmental impact report, and plan refinement and adoption. Next he explained the three challenge areas which framed the current workshop series. The first challenge corresponding to the Community Design workshops was *Building a Successful Commercial and Residential Neighborhood*. The challenge for the Economic Development workshops was *Growing the Berkeley Economy*, followed by the challenge for Community Services, *Developing a Successful Community - New Approaches to Services, Housing and Public Safety*. Mr. Kelley noted that two core values have been echoed throughout the General Plan meetings: diversity of people and quality of life. He then summarized the key points and principles which resulted from each of the three workshop topics. Building on those results, he listed major change strategies produced from the workshops:

- To re-create major commercial corridors, including the Downtown, as neighborhoods.
- To make Berkeley a more walkable/accessible City.
- To grow businesses.



- To create public/private partnerships for employment and training (skilled labor force).
- To use school sites and other neighborhood public facilities as community centers.
- To shift to prevention-based services and environmental health management.
- To develop regional partnerships.

He then explained the decision making framework for potential projects or programs, using the Community Design, Economic Development, and Community Services principles as a screen for analysis, discussion and evaluation. Then he described the exercise for small group discussion. Three hypothetical scenarios were drafted by Planning staff to encourage discussions and create solutions which integrate the three topic areas of Community Design, Economic Development and Community Services and utilize the decision making framework.

Meeting participants then divided into five discussion groups. Discussion groups were facilitated by Planning staff and comments were recorded on flip charts. Each group discussed one or two of the following case studies: a multi-service community facility, unreinforced masonry buildings in the Downtown, and housing in a commercial/transit corridor. Following the small groups, participants reconvened in the larger group to report on the outcome of their discussions.

Director Kelley closed the meeting, thanking participants for a successful and productive workshop and encouraging that they stay involved in the General Plan Update process.

Summary of Major Issues

The discussion groups considered three hypothetical scenarios each of which brought together Community Design, Economic Development and Community Service issues. The intent of the exercise was to present meeting participants with an opportunity to examine case studies using the General Plan Principles arrived at in the previous six workshops. The case studies required participants to address policy questions related to a multi-service community facility, unreinforced masonry buildings in Downtown Berkeley, and housing in a commercial/transit corridor. Each scenario referenced relevant principles from Community Design, Economic Development, and Community Services and elicited policy recommendations which integrated the three topic areas. Three groups considered the housing scenario, two groups discussed the multi-service community facility, and two groups discussed the unreinforced masonry building scenario.



Multi-Service Facility Scenario

Meeting participants were asked to consider three possible locations for a hypothetical multi-service community facility for families with children. The facility was made possible by a federal grant and would provide primary medical care, outpatient drug rehabilitation for expectant mothers, and a job counseling and job readiness program. The locations identified for consideration were a vacant building in the Downtown, a building at East Campus on MLK Jr. Way, and underutilized school land near a transit corridor in North Berkeley. Meeting facilitators asked the workshop participants to assume the role of a Mayor's Task Force and develop locational criteria and conditions of approval for the facility. Participants' comments focused on locational and operational considerations, and conditions of approval including mitigations for the surrounding neighborhood.

The discussion of facility location was based on considerations for the service users and the neighborhood surrounding the facility. Participants viewed service accessibility as a primary objective for service users. Participants expressed a range of opinions concerning where to place services that would be most beneficial to the people in need of them. In general, the demographics and needs of clients were considered to be the first consideration for choosing a location. Some felt that the facility should be placed in the area where the primary users live, where it would be immediately accessible. Others felt that it is important for services to be located in neighborhoods which are removed from an individual's contributing circumstances. One participant commented that accessibility and adequacy of services is more important than location and that proximity of location does not ensure that clients will use the service. Another person commented that the location should make clients comfortable, both while they are at the facility and as they travel to and from the site. Participants felt that accessibility should be achieved either through locating the facility in proximity to public transit, or through the City's provision of a shuttle service. Participants were divided as to whether the facility should be located centrally near existing services, or in an area with fewer existing services.

Distribution of existing services was also an issue when considering the neighborhood surrounding the facility. People raised the issue of equitable distribution of services, and utilizing underused facilities. Participants commented that in consideration of the neighboring residents, the facility should only operate twelve hours a day and there should be a maximum number of permitted clients and residency requirements for service recipients.

In discussing conditions for site approval, participants stipulated that there should be neighborhood involvement in the early stages of the decision making process. In addition, participants called for a structure for longterm cooperation and communication between the neighborhood and the service providers. Participants suggested that a consortium be formed to integrate service approaches and provide the neighborhood with one entity with which to deal in resolving neighborhood concerns. Participants suggested that service providers attend neigh-



neighborhood group meetings and speak with residents door to door in order to gain neighborhood support. Mitigations included having a neighborhood resident appointed to a service agency's decision making board, creating a central number for complaints and immediate response, and letting the neighborhood participate in determining hours of operation and client traffic. Other concerns for the neighborhood included the potential for increased traffic and the need to maintain neighborhood character. Participants had concerns about ensuring the effectiveness of services and continued longterm financing. People suggested that the program avoid recirculating the same people, and track clients in order to determine the rate of success.

Taking the discussed criteria and conditions into account, different groups selected each of the proposed locations as a site for the facility. Some people thought that the facility should be located at the North Berkeley site or the East Campus site because they viewed them as being the most isolated from drug-related influences, or in the case of the latter, because this location is close to Berkeley High and near a major transportation corridor. Others thought that the Downtown location near Berkeley High would be the most practical for teen mothers.

Unreinforced Masonry Buildings (URM)

Participants were asked to assume the role of an advisory Downtown Improvement Group (DIG). In the URM scenario, DIG was asked by the City Council to generate policies regarding how to determine if a URM building should be demolished or brought up to earthquake safety standards. The buildings under consideration included residential hotels and apartments with ground floor commercial space, offices and stores, theaters, and buildings which house social services. The scenario presented examples of measures which other cities have used to help finance improvements to URM buildings, including relaxation of regulatory requirements and city administered financial mechanisms. Meeting participants offered criteria for determining which buildings to reinforce and which to demolish. In addition, strategies were proposed for assisting tenants through the upgrade process, evaluating the value of structures and complying with seismic safety standards.

Participants advocated that the City develop a set of criteria in order to prioritize and rank the importance of structures and allocate funding. They recommended that important landmarks, design contributors, affordable housing, and buildings with public uses be designated for financing and assistance with compliance. Participants felt that dangerous buildings which do not fit into the above criteria should be considered for demolition. Several people suggested that the retro-fitting process be used as an opportunity to encourage a desirable housing mix in the Downtown including new housing and mixed use.

Participants were concerned about the impact of the compliance and retrofitting process on tenants of unreinforced masonry buildings. They felt that residential tenants, who are largely low-income, should be considered first for assistance with relocation, followed by retail and



office tenants. To protect residential tenants, participants recommended that the City limit rent increases to a fixed percent of retro-fitting costs. They also suggested that the City help owners with strategies for compliance, mitigate loss of revenue to businesses during the retro-fitting process, and avoid reassessing property taxes after compliance.

Meeting participants were hesitant to relax regulatory requirements as a strategy for easing compliance. They felt that City money should not be spent unless this expenditure resulted in a building which is completely earthquake safe and structurally sound. Some people expressed resistance to City money being used when resources are needed for other priorities. In response, participants suggested a bond measure or tax assessment district to fund efforts to meet seismic safety standards. It was stated that the City needs to set realistic rules for demolition, regulatory relaxation, and financing for buildings in the Downtown which do not meet seismic safety standards.

Housing in a Commercial/Transit Corridor

Meeting participants were asked to help the City review current zoning policies for commercial corridors. As members of the Commercial Corridors Revitalization Committee (CCRC), participants were called upon to recommend policies for improving commercial corridors and neighborhoods which include a mixture of commercial and residential streets. In particular, the CCRC was asked to consider a project on a piece of property which extended from a commercial street through to the residential street behind. The developer had plans to build a one story commercial building on the corridor and a three story condominium apartment building facing the residential street. Participants' concerns focused on community involvement in decision making and maintaining neighborhood character.

Participants recognized that housing adjacent to a commercial corridor enhances commercial activity and public life. They wanted design elements such as pedestrian linkages between housing and commercial areas to be included to ensure connections between the two uses. They also wanted the density of development to be in character with the neighborhood, viewing a three story apartment building as inappropriate. Participants felt that the building on the commercial corridor should be higher, serving to buffer noise disturbance on the residential side. Other suggestions for the project included underground parking and rooftop gardens. Participants also suggested shared parking arrangements for residential and commercial users, and lowered parking requirements on commercial projects. One person emphasized the need to foster a favorable financing climate for mixed use projects.



Transcript of Comments

**Denotes key points*

Comments were collected from flip charts used to record the group discussions. Comments represent the opinions of individuals and are not necessarily the consensus of the group.

Multi-Service Facility Scenario

Issues:

- Outpatient Drug-rehab facility is a red flag
- Locate facility with consistent or compatible uses - not in retail corridors
- Locate drug rehab facility on MLK site or North Berkeley school site, because people recovering from drug problems should recover away from the areas where they got in trouble
- Drug Rehab program is more acceptable because of target group (expectant mothers)
- If job counseling offered then school site might be appropriate
- Where does money to operate it come from?
- How to assure that services are affordable?
- Fairness: all neighborhoods must contribute fair share
- Priority to areas with fewer existing services
- Transportation: accessibility
- Central location: better to have facility close to existing services
- Safety: sense of security
- Put it where it will serve those who need it
- Do not isolate services
- Focus on resolving problems quickly
- Opposition of neighborhood
- De-centralization



- Incorporation with new housing developments
- Effectiveness of services
- Accountability/Measurable Results: Facility must be productive
- Support basic civil rights
- Need more of already successful services
- Is large institutionalized facility acceptable within neighborhood?
- Utilize underused facility first before building new ones *
- Scattered sites: service centers to cater to communities where they are located - community involvement *
- Maintain programs that are working *
- Community input: criteria for acceptance *
- Can city mandate equitability?
- Facility is acceptable
- Where to locate: Downtown/all sites mentioned in scenario
- 12 hours maximum
- Accessibility
- Maximum number of clients
- Prevention-oriented
- All scenario General Plan principles reaffirmed
- Innovative financing
- Split on thru-access vs. security
- Continuous commercial frontage - limit driveways
- Maintain neighborhood's character
- In Service Training for city employees
- Residency requirements for recipients



- What are measurable results? Don't want to keep recycling the same people through; end point for individuals
- Will use generate more traffic?
- Needs sufficient funds to have real impact
- Provide shuttle service for facility
- Unmet needs assessment to direct services more effectively
- Demographics: teens, unwed, low-income. Should location be near BHS? What best serves client
- Funding based on quality/success of services, not on policies that are detrimental to service
- Client needs come first; locational access primary concern

Criteria/Policy Recommendations:

- Operates 12 hours maximum - limit hours of operation
- Focus programs on prevention services, especially nutrition
- Has to be on a bus line - access and mobility
- Locate facility near to their clients
- Locate somewhere nearer to the center of Berkeley
- Limit the maximum number of clients per day
- Include prevention programs as part of the facility's operations
- Ensure confidentiality of services to client
- Need to assure that services are working - have center track clients
- Scattered sites
- Well-integrated sites
- Utilize existing sites
- Equitable distribution of services
- Survey of underutilized public facilities



- All neighborhoods accept fair share of programs
- Demographics and needs of client should determine location
- Move from crisis-mode to prevention and self-esteem raising
- Placing services in crisis areas exacerbates the original problem - better to remove people from area*
- Shuttles making services accessible city-wide. Berkeley should provide these
- Accessibility and adequacy of services more important than location
- Proximity of location does not ensure clients will use service
- Location should make clients comfortable- being there and coming and going
- Locate facility in conjunction with other services *
- Use existing facility at Herrick and add the \$2 million to job component
- High School/Downtown best location
- Close to primary users - high school students/Vets, off of major commercial center *
- Make sure people who will be impacted are included in decision making process
- East Campus preferred: Major transportation corridor near BHS

Conditions of Approval:

- Neighbors involved at earliest possible stage in discussions with care providers
- Utilize established neighborhood group meeting and door to door
- Economic feasibility established at start
- Matrix of companion services will explain locational choice
- Need to bring history forward, including prior needs assessment
- Look at long-term economic sustainability, what other funds could be leveraged, particularly from other programs
- Rules, provider qualifications, mitigations in community

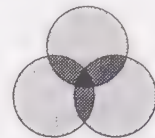


- Mitigations: Hours of operation, how people come and go, providers go to neighborhood meetings, neighborhood association has designated member on policy board
- Cluster of programs in one neighborhood
- Providers need to be sensitive *
- Consortium of agencies should have representatives at neighborhood meetings: encourages integrated services, strategic thinking and delivery*
- Need a central number to call for complaints and immediate response *
- Newsletter by consortium of neighborhood organizations; on-going communication
- Consortium Model allows city and neighborhoods to monitor programs and outcomes
- Covenant between city and neighborhoods with regard to community services
- Train mothers in program for \$15-18/hr jobs - Economic feasibility of successful outcome
- Parents need transitional service and some permanent
- Make facility blend in with community - no eyesores

Unreinforced Masonry Buildings

Issues:

- Need a public benefit to justify using public funds on privately owned buildings
- Displacement of residents - Where do they go?
- Mitigate impact to businesses which lose income during construction
- Triggers requirement for access
- Retrofit to standard where building will presumably survive earthquake if public funds involved
- Special attention for landmarks



- Conflict/balance of public benefits: preserving landmarks is good but the city may spend money on building that doesn't survive earthquake
- Consider what buildings have value for tourism when screening structures
- Buildings' value to community - use/appearance
- Vacant housing - can be made available at higher rents? Are allowable rents economical? Are building techniques generally bad?
- For public funding, can there be criteria for rating importance of building?
- City has a stake in various values
- City has to make it possible to meet rules
- City has interest in economic viability of Downtown
- Doing nothing will lead to cases by case action, no criteria for triage
- Landmarks can use state historic building code - looser standards
- Should rebuilding plan for site be required as is currently?
- What about buildings that aren't financed?
- Nervous about using City money given other priorities - maybe small bond for key landmark priorities
- How to deal with relocation of tenants?
- Should City subsidize private owners
- Relocation easier for commercial
- It is unrealistic to deny owner value of property; need to subsidize tenant
- Consider value-added of rehab to owners; limits costs passed on

Policy Recommendations:

- Some Downtown buildings should be demolished
- Develop a "new screen" - some landmarks maybe should be demolished
- Allow demolition of non-landmarks to provide funding for retrofitting landmarks



- Rather have more time than weaker standard, weak buildings; move tenants around, work with engineers
- Funding from either operative funds and/or exactions
- What criteria can be added to existing eligibility requirements for financing priorities? Important landmarks, design contributors, affordable housing, publicly accessible buildings (theaters, city buildings)
- Don't fund very dangerous, non-contributory buildings; encourage demolition
- Review URM building for appropriate treatment - wholistic URM program
- Rule for demolition, regulatory relaxation, financing for buildings
- Help owner strategize on how to comply
- Identify priority targets for assistance
- Save facade - rehabilitate building
- Create tax assessment districts. Self-tax or apply for outside loans
- Public decision making process to prioritize buildings
- Based on building evaluation, rank buildings to decide which to demolish
- City should play role in financing as guarantor or with lien if necessary
- No subsidies for relocation of commercial tenants
- Prioritize relocation: 1) residents, 2) retail, 3) office
- City should put time limit on relocation subsidies. Eligibility to be determined by income
- Regional cooperation for lending programs; pool resources; role for state
- Seismic standards should not be lowered; level of certainty should be such that personal safety ensured- i.e. people survive the Big One
- Consider long-term strategy for desirable housing mix
- Consequences of rehabilitation for low-income tenants
- City should limit rent increases to fixed percent of retro-fit costs
- Maintain current mix



- Partnership between owner/tenant for survival; if no cooperative plan demolish building
- Include historical landmark status as part of evaluation
- After retrofit, property taxes should not be re-assessed
- Encourage construction of new housing and mixed-use
- Define public good if using public money
- Should City bring buildings up to salvagable standard?
- What is economic benefit?

Housing Scenario

Issues:

- Number of units
- Income level
- Noise: sensitivity to neighborhood
- Renters v. homeowners
- Consider both families and single people
- Do we need more commercial space/more housing: mixed-use
- Should zoning be changed
- Economic realism: emphasis on commercial
- Sense of security: combine housing/commercial
- Density of development/neighborhood character
- Social equity
- Commercial character
- Maintain population diversity: mix of housing for different income levels
- Relative importance of housing/commercial development
- Transportation: parking
- Revitalize commercial area by building more housing



- Human-scale development
- How does development contribute to existing character of neighborhood
- Security: police substation *
- What is goal of project? What are community's goals? Work with community
- Design: keep residential two story
- Community services *
- Design: gateway for residents between commercial/residential space
- Community services: commitment to people/businesses (balancing act)
- Will a commercial building do what it's supposed to do?
- Can you get past the commercial building to the residential building? (security issue)
- Getting financing for a mixed-use development is difficult
- Commercial building would have to be as tall as the residential building to block the noise
- Mixed-use in a commercial block enhances the commercial area
- Size and style of new building
- Noise from new building
- Condos are not low income affordable
- Corridor-residential transition: this might be appropriate
- Need strong link to transit; incentives to use transit, not drive

Policy Recommendations:

- Maintain balance between interests of residents and business owners
- Encourage use/expansion of public transportation, biking, walking
- Requirements for fairness in housing development: controls on type/market of housing units
- More diverse housing, should be affordable to a range of people



- Assist developers in complying with existing policies
- Help to modify projects so they benefit both community and developer (create a win-win situation)
- Make sure to have input from entire community in defining what is needed
- Make sure proposed projects fit values of the community
- Make sure the City plans the City, not the developers
- Economic efficiency
- Create culturally appropriate development: keep businesses that will fit in to existing character of neighborhoods
- Maintain the neighborhoods' character
- Insure that neighbors participate in the review of the project
- Maintain same scale throughout the block
- Support diversity of housing
- Open space: use roof gardens
- University Avenue as a possible site
- Encourage pedestrian access between the streets
- Continuous frontage for the commercial building
- Encourage pedestrian access to more than one business. Enable shoppers to leave their cars and walk
- Prefer two-story/two-story or three-story commercial/two-story residential rather than one-story/three story
- Step residential down to two stories
- Move taller building to commercial streets*
- To the extent possible, keep parking underground (too expensive for many developers)
- Maintain control over commercial use: no liquor stores



- Encourage mixed-use on commercial corridors step down to residential side of block *
- Be creative about landscaping and open space requirements
- Be sensitive to character of residential street
- Ensure safe passage from residential to commercial
- Consider shared parking arrangement between residential and commercial
- Consider lowering parking requirements on commercial projects
- Public restrooms accessible from commercial streets as project mitigation. Share cost between developer and public
- Need to have policies which encourage socio-economic diversity which are translated into project mitigations
- Strengthen inclusionary zoning
- Design standards regarding massing and density to encourage open space
- Create favorable financing climate - private/public partnerships for mixed use



List of Participants

Jurgen Aust	Susan Ferrayra	Doris Nassiry
Ida Baker	Travis Fretter	B. Olds
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Jan Cecil	Babette Jee	Pamela Sanford
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Fred Collins	John Keilch	Bob Sparks
John Courtney	Jeff Leiter	Stephen Stuart
Betty Croly	Rick Lewis	Will Travis
Gregory Daniel	Mark Liolios	Babs Wardwell
Shirley Dean	Barbara Lundburg	Ron Washington
Frances Dede Dewey	Linda Maio	Susan Wengraf
Budd Dickinson	Ken Martin	E.B. Williams
Mike Dobbins	Sally McCall	Carla Woodworth
David Duncan	Kirk McCarthy	Cathy Zoha
Gary Farber	Judy Nakadegawa	Nina Zurier

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City of Berkeley
General Plan Update
Community Workshop #7

Saturday, October 15, 1994
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
North Berkeley Senior Center

"MAKING THE CONNECTIONS" WORKSHOP LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS, HEALTHY ECONOMY AND EFFECTIVE SERVICES

AGENDA

- 10:00 I. INTRODUCTIONS/OPENING REMARKS
- Welcome by Jeff Horowitz, Planning Commission Chair
 - Opening remarks by the Honorable Jeffrey Shattuck Leiter, Mayor
- 10:15 II. A MODEL FOR CREATING LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS, A HEALTHY ECONOMY AND EFFECTIVE SERVICES
(Presentation - Gil Kelley, Planning Director)
- Looking at the whole picture: community design, economic development, community services
 - Principles for a healthy city
 - Strategies for repairing the natural and built environment, developing the economy and delivering services
- 11:00 III. SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: APPLYING PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES TO REAL-LIFE SCENARIOS
- 1:00 IV. BREAK
- 1:15 V. RECONVENE LARGE GROUP
- Reports back from small groups
 - Next step: preparation of Draft General Plan
- 2:00 VI. CLOSE

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MULTI-SERVICE COMMUNITY FACILITY

Situation: In recognition of Berkeley's commitment to providing innovative and comprehensive community services, the federal government has just awarded Berkeley a one-time 2 million dollar grant to establish a multi-service community facility for families with children. The following services will be provided at the facility: primary care medical clinic; outpatient drug rehabilitation program for expectant mothers; job counseling and job readiness program. City staff have identified three possible locations for the facility: a vacant building in the Downtown, a building at the East Campus location on MLK Jr. Way, or underutilized school land near a transit corridor in North Berkeley. Other locations may be possible.

Your Task: You are a member of the Mayor's Task Force, made up of residents, representatives from the business community, social service providers and the clergy. **The City Council has asked you to develop locational criteria and conditions of approval for the facility.** You have heard from service providers who have expressed their support for the project and residents who have expressed their strong opposition to the facility because they fear that it will attract more needy people to Berkeley.

Some **questions** you might consider in developing your response to this issue:

1. Applying the General Plan principles below, what criteria would you use to determine the best location for this facility?
2. What conditions should be required by the City to ensure that the project succeeds and remains a good neighbor at any of the possible locations?

General Plan Principles to take particular note of in considering the problem:

Community Design

Mixed Use

- Appropriate Transitions and Connections
- Access and Mobility

Economic Development

- Business Diversity
- Social Equity
- Community Character

Community Services

- Commitment to People: Access, Availability and Affordability
- Fairness
- Sense of Security
- Sensitivity to Neighborhoods
- Measurable Results
- Financial Responsibility
- Future Thinking

UNREINFORCED MASONRY BUILDINGS IN DOWNTOWN BERKELEY

Situation: There are some 50 unreinforced masonry (URM) buildings in the Downtown area--seismically unsound buildings which are likely to collapse in a major earthquake. Some are residential buildings--residential hotels and apartments, many with commercial space on the ground floor ("mixed use"). Some are strictly commercial--with offices and stores. Others are theaters, or sites for social service agencies. Roughly 1/4 are designated City landmarks.

State law requires the City of Berkeley to develop and implement a program to bring unreinforced masonry buildings up to life safety standards to protect the people in and around the buildings in case of earthquake (the building itself might still not be salvagable). There are several different standards which may legally be used. To protect public safety, Berkeley has chosen a more stringent set of standards than most other cities, but not the most stringent it could legally impose.

A significant number of property owners have repaired their buildings. Others are in the process of doing so, or are planning to do so. But others state that they cannot afford to repair their buildings--that the market rents they could charge (whether for apartments, offices, or stores) are simply insufficient to repay the costs of making seismic upgrades, estimated to be \$12-20 a square foot. Repaying a loan for this amount requires a rent increase of approximately \$120 per month (or 20-25%) for a typical Downtown apartment, most of which are occupied by low or very low income renters. Downtown retailers and restaurants in URM buildings could be facing a 10-20% rent increase. Other property owners say that they believe it would be possible for them to make the repairs financially, but that banks do not want to make loans on URM buildings in an area they regard as somewhat marginal for retailers.

Public Benefit of Retrofitting URM buildings:

The large number of URM buildings in Downtown poses several problems from a planning perspective. The Downtown is supposed to be the focal and gathering point for the whole city--the civic and entertainment center, and hopefully an increasingly important shopping area. It has a concentration of historically significant buildings, many of which are URM buildings. It is a central location where a number of public and non-profit social services are provided. It is also an area with a large amount of higher density, generally low cost housing. But all of these important Downtown functions are threatened because many of the buildings they take place in are URM buildings. If it is uneconomic to repair these buildings, their public or commercial roles will be lost. If a number of buildings are demolished, historically significant structures could be lost and the urban fabric of the Downtown damaged.

Your Task: You are a member of the advisory Downtown Improvement Group (DIG), made up of residents, businesspeople, property owners, and others. DIG has been asked to make a report back to relevant commissions and the City Council on how to respond to this issue. **The Council has stressed that it wants a strategy for dealing with the problem as a whole, and not merely to respond on a building by building basis.**

As you and the staff have dug into the issue, you have found that other cities have developed various **options** for URM programs, including the following:

1. No City involvement: assume that property owners will figure out a way to handle the problem;
2. Allow owners to demolish buildings which would be uneconomic to rehabilitate;
3. Relaxation of regulatory requirements:
 - a. Relax upgrade standards to reduce rehabilitation costs; and/or
 - b. Allow owners a longer time period to upgrade their buildings.
4. City develops financial mechanisms:
 - a. City provides loan guarantees to a consortium of banks that make loans for seismic upgrades (City's General Fund) for guarantees;
 - b. City floats a General Obligation bond (paid for out of property taxes) to finance rehabilitation which would otherwise be uneconomic.

Some **questions** you might consider in developing your response to this issue:

1. Which of the proposed programs best responds to the problem? If more than one approach is called for, what is the combination?
2. How would your recommendations support or not support General Plan principles?

General Plan Principles to take particular note of in considering the problem:

Community Design

- Neighborhood and District Character
- Mixed Use
- Public Life
- Housing Diversity

Economic Development

- Business Diversity
- Local Ownership
- Community Character
- Economic Realism

Community Services

- Social Equity
- Sense of Security
- Financial Responsibility
- Future Thinking

HOUSING IN A COMMERCIAL/TRANSIT CORRIDOR

Situation: A developer has an option on land that runs from a commercial street clear through the block to the residential street behind. The site is within a few blocks of a major intersection where several bus lines stop. The developer wants to build two buildings, a one-story commercial building along the commercial street and a three-story building with condominium apartments on the residential street. The residential street currently has a mixture of one and two-story buildings on that block, although there are several three-story apartment buildings on the next block. The developer claims that the separate commercial building will screen the residential building from the noise of the traffic on the commercial street and make the residential building a better place, where families will want to live. The current zoning does not allow the proposed project, but the City is reviewing its policies for the commercial corridors.

Your Task: You are a member of the Commercial Corridors Revitalization Committee (CCRC), made up of homeowners, tenants, merchants, land owners and representatives from several City Commissions. **You have been asked to recommend policies to improve the commercial corridors to the Planning Commission and the City Council.** The developer has asked your committee to recommend policies that will allow more housing to be built within two blocks of commercial streets and thus allow his project to go forward as proposed.

Some **questions** you might consider in developing your response to this issue:

1. What policies would you propose to improve neighborhoods that include a mixture of commercial and residential streets?
2. How would your recommendations support the General Plan principles?

General Plan Principles to take particular note of in considering the problem:

Community Design

- Neighborhood and District Character
- Mixed Use
- Appropriate Transitions and Connections
- Access and Mobility
- Housing Diversity

Economic Development

- Economic Realism

Community Services

- Commitment to People: Access, Availability and Affordability
- Fairness
- Sense of Security

PRINCIPLES FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Workshops 6/94 - 9/94

Community Design

- * Neighborhood and District Character
- * Public Life
- * Mixed Use
- * Appropriate Transitions and Connections
- * Access and Mobility
- * Sustainable Natural Environment
- * Housing Diversity

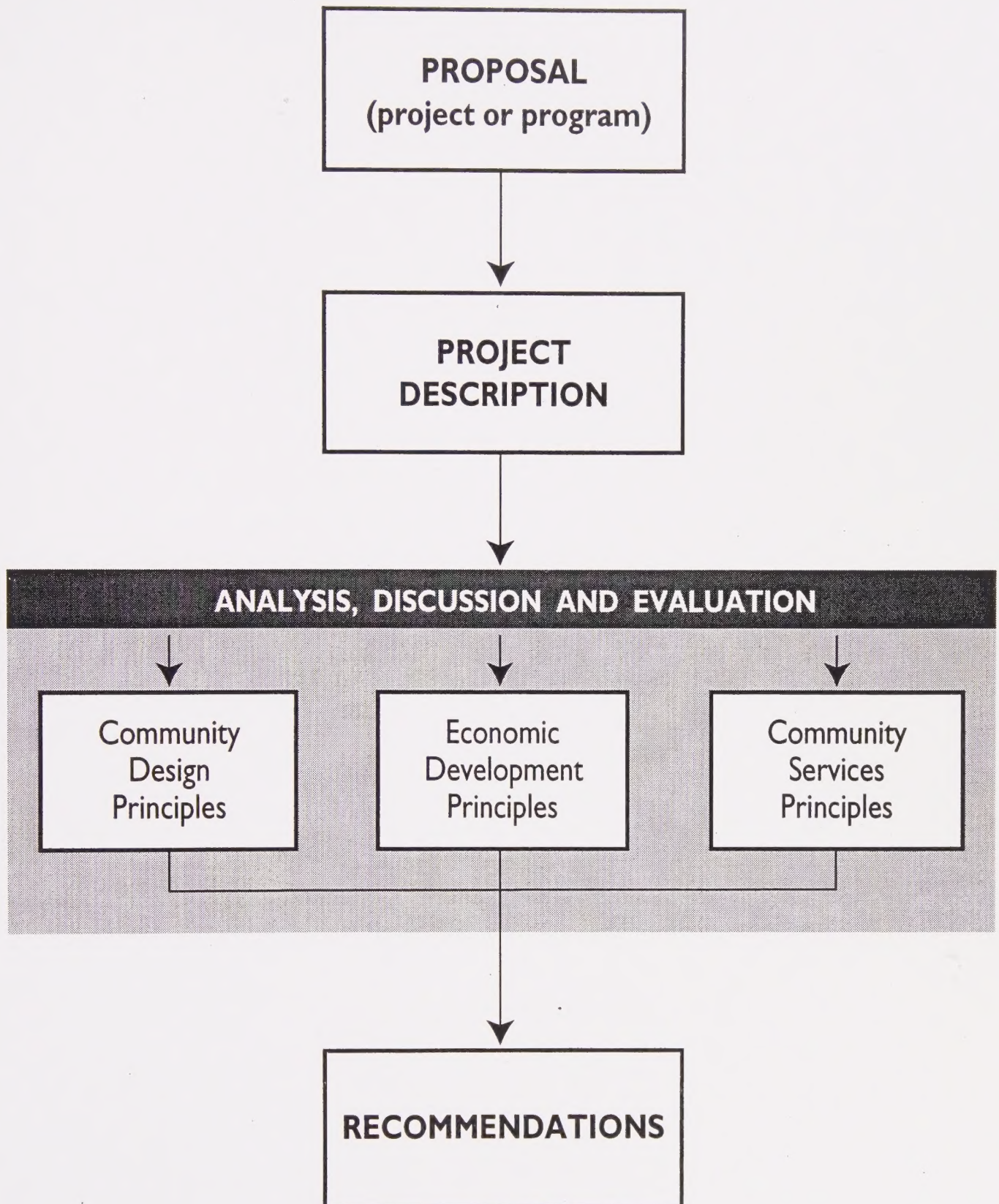
Economic Development

- * Business Diversity
- * Quality Jobs
- * Revenue Generation
- * Local Ownership
- * Social Equity
- * Community Character
- * Economic Realism

Community Services

- * Commitment to People: Access, Availability and Affordability
- * Fairness
- * Sense of Security
- * Sensitivity to Neighborhoods
- * Measurable Results
- * Financial Responsibility
- * Future Thinking

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK



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